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NASA Wallops Begins Final Phase of Contamination Cleanup

The final phase of the cleanup of soil and groundwater at a three acre site contaminated with petroleum by-products from an old aviation fuel tank facility began March 27, 2000, at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Va.

The contamination, caused by aviation gasoline and jet fuel leaks and spills of underground storage tanks and piping prior to 1981, does not pose a threat to public or private drinking wells, including those supplying Wallops or Chincoteague Island.

The cleanup is part of a process since 1988 when NASA began an environmental assessment of its old aviation fuel tank farm adjacent to the runways on the Wallops Main Base. The Chincoteague Naval Air Station from 1942 to 1959 used the old aviation fuel farm. In 1959, NASA acquired the facility and used the fuel farm until 1981.

In the final phase of cleanup, vapor extraction is being performed to remediate the soil. This process is similar to using a vacuum cleaner. The suction from the vapor extraction piping, embedded in the ground, pulls the petroleum by-product vapors, thus, removing the contamination from the soil.

Groundwater remediation is being achieved by removing groundwater, treating it, and using a drain field to re-inject the water. With this process, approximately 100 gallons of water per minute is extracted, cleaned and re-injected. It is anticipated that this will be conducted 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

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Both the soil and groundwater remediation is expected to run a maximum of 10 years.

The final, or third phase, began in 1991. In phase one the underground fuel storage tanks were removed and shallow contaminated soils were excavated and disposed. Phase two concentrated on the final design for the remediation. Since 1988, NASA has spent more than \$2.5 million in the cleanup efforts.

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